

Spirit, soul and Body 01 1 thes.5:23

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon explores the significance of understanding and appreciating our spirit, soul, and body throughout the stages of life, emphasizing faith in the face of aging and mortality.

Duration: 31:58

Scripture: Psalm 90:10, Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Topics: "Body And Soul", "Human Nature"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of our bodies and how they change over time. He refers to the biblical passage in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which reminds us that we are made up of spirit, soul, and body. The preacher mentions that our bodies have an expected lifespan of around 70 to 80 years, but acknowledges that this can vary depending on individual strength. He also discusses the changes and challenges that come with aging, such as athletes being replaced by younger competitors and the diminishing effectiveness of cosmetics for women.

Transcript

It's not very often that we have exactly the same audience as we had yesterday, and that makes it necessary to torture those who are faithful for the benefit of those who came in. And we're not here yesterday morning just to give you a brief review. We use this as our springboard text, 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 23, where Paul by the Spirit is reminding us that we are spirit, soul, and body, and that all three of these parts of us are important.

And while there is emphasis given to the spirit, because we are creatures that tend to go to extremes, and maybe even forget that the body, too, is important. So, I want to lay a little stress on the importance of our body. We mentioned yesterday morning that these are gifts that we receive from God, and that they are given to us, first of all.

Someone else has to take care of us, because we are totally helpless as we arrive on this scene. But gradually the responsibility shifts to the owner, and the owner is responsible for the care of that body. And he may be able to shorten his life, or lengthen his life, by either being careless or taking care of the needs of the body.

I think we ought to turn this morning for a verse in the 90th Psalm, which is a very familiar psalm. And as you have read that psalm a number of times, you will recognize that the writer is very time-conscious. He

uses many, many expressions, a thousand years, months, days.

And down in verse 10, I think we should use that as our verse this morning, Psalm 98, verse 10, "...the days of our years are threescore years and ten. If by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." I'm sure that this is speaking of the body. If I were to give a title to my message this morning, it would be, What to Expect from Our Body.

You've already had some experience in knowing that the body does change, and I have raised the question, why does the Spirit of God tell us here that we have some general expectation that the days of our bodily length on the earth is probably threescore years and ten, if by reason of strength fourscore years. He didn't say 80 years or 70 years, but used the term scores, which is, of course, 20 years. I wonder if you have noticed that our life is changed by these scores to some extent.

Yesterday morning we pointed out that the first approximately 20 years, and maybe I should go back to tell you that no one can claim this verse and say, I have a right to be sure that I will not die before I'm 70 years old. The Bible says so. The days of our years are threescore years and ten.

We know there are other verses that would not allow that interpretation, that there is a possibility of dying, but there is a general sense in which this is the allotted span of our life on earth. So, the subject, what to expect from our bodies. In those first 20 years, the first score, there is the development of the body, the growth of the body, and the height of the body.

I don't know of anyone who passes the 20-year mark that can say, I'm still growing. There is growth up to approximately that point, and from then on, the person has leveled off, and that is his height. If he's six foot tall at the age of 20, he probably will remain that way until he starts shrinking.

Now, I don't know whether I should even mention the width of the body or not, but I'm taking a guess that, regarding the width of the body, about 50% of it is beyond our control, that may have been inherited from daddy or mother, and the other 50% may be somewhat in our control. But, the development of the body, mentally, physically, is seen in those 20 years. Then we go to the next study.

And this is probably the age or the period of time where we can use the three V's. Vim, vigor, and vitality. When the army is looking for men, they make a boundary of the kind of men they're looking for, and usually they include the age limit.

And that, of course, will depend perhaps upon supply and demand. If the demand is not too high, well, it may be from 20 to 35. Or, if there is a demand, a draft, then it may go from 18 to 45.

But, it stays in that second score, doesn't it, pretty well? Which means, during that period, there is the full strength. Man has reached his height, so far as strength is concerned. Our blessed Lord was approximately 33 years of age when he died on the cross, in the full bloom of health.

One day, a man said to me, You know, it's a shame that that man, who was sinless and who did so much good on the earth, that he had to die in the full bloom of his strength. And I guess he presumed that, suppose he had been living 80 years of age, look how much more he could have done! And I had to point out that the greatest work that he ever could have done, he did at the age of 33, because he had his mind on the fact that he opened the eyes of the blind, and he unstopped the years of the deaf, and raised the dead, and all of these things. And just think, what could have been accomplished if he had lived to be 80 years of age? But he forgot that the main purpose of his coming was to settle the sin question.

I guess some of us, a few years ago, was it 25 years ago, when those five missionaries were murdered in Wadi Aqqa, India. We raised the question immediately, isn't that a shame? Just think of the good they could have accomplished! They are in the bloom of their health, their strength! Where was God when that happened? Why did he allow it to happen? From our point of view, it would seem as though it would have been much better if they had lived through those years of strength and served the Lord. If God doesn't make any mistakes, then I know that the death of those five missionaries had a tremendous sobering effect, not only on the United States, but the whole world, an impact was made.

And as people read of that young man, who perhaps were a little careless about their involvement in the work of the Lord, said, somebody's got to step in and do the work that they left undone. And probably, when we see the whole record unfolded, we can say those five men couldn't have done anything better. And the far-reaching effect of laying down their lives in that which seemed so unnecessary, they accomplished what God had in mind.

In those years of strength, we realize that there is a leveling-off period, and we don't stay in that second score very long. And I think I ought to go over into the third score, which is 40 to 60, because if my eyes are good, many of you have just passed the 40th mark, and you are now in that third score of 40 to 60. And a number of things happen.

A number of changes take place during that time. The athlete who has a cupboard full of trophies, he is shocked when he is asked to sit on the bench. We found a junior who can do it better.

You have to join the has-been. The ladies say, I wonder why they don't make cosmetics as strong as they used to. They just don't do the job anymore, and it's their fault.

There's something wrong, and we have to adjust to something new. We discover that there are some hungry, ambitious germs flying all around us and looking for victims. And sometimes they seem to organize, and they pick out their victim, and say, that's a nice juicy one, let's claim him.

And we raise the question, this is strange that we have to face this getting older all the time, but we have to face it regardless. In some cases, I guess we have to go to the doctor and find out. We have just detected that I'm not quite as strong as I used to be.

Something is wrong, and I can't put my finger on it. And the doctor who is trained has instruments to measure things, and he says, it's Mr. Cholesterol that has come to see you, or Mr. Diabetes has come to see you, or there is a big family of it's wards, Arthur, Burs, Noor, Lymphen, just a number of them, and they come to visit you, and some of them don't even come to visit you, they move in. And they stay there, and we say now, that's strange, I don't like this.

I thought I could go through life, and I could remain strong forever, and just go on, but we have to face facts. And sometimes we may be naughty enough to raise the question, I wonder why the Lord didn't bring us into the world at 90 years of age, and then we got younger every day. Younger, younger, younger, and eventually a helpless tiny baby.

Would you like that? No, I don't think so. No, we'd better leave it the way it is. The Lord didn't make any mistakes.

So, we are heading in that direction, and there's not very much that we can do about it. Appreciation of the body. In that period that you have just entered now, you find that your arms aren't long enough to read the

telephone numbers anymore, so you have to get these gadgets.

And then, not very long before they say, you need bifocals. And then they go a little farther and say trifocals. I don't know what would be next to that, whether it's gotten farther than that, but anyway.

It means that there's something happening to our bodies. And then we say, people don't talk as plain as they used to. I have never seen so many people that mumble as they do today.

Why don't they speak distinctly like they used to speak? And there are just a number of things that we have to recognize that are happening day after day. Then comes that we're getting up towards that time when we face retirement. And I have seen men who look for retirement just like a child looks for Christmas.

Counts the days when he's going to be retired. I'm reminded of a policeman who lived in Durham on our street, just as we were moving there. And he was just telling us how wonderful it'd be to be retired.

He was retired for one week. And they said he comes up to the police station every day because he doesn't know what to do with himself. He had to be in the house with his wife, and I don't know what kind of a wife he had, but it seemed like punishment to him, and he wanted to be up there at the police station.

I know another man who had a restaurant. Very active man. A wonderful man.

He was back there in the kitchen doing anything. He had everything popping, and then he came out to the people, the patients or the customers, and he would talk to all of them, and he would have a conversation. An active kind of a fellow.

And had plenty of money. He decided to retire. You might as well have put him in jail.

He was a miserable wretch the rest of his life. He didn't know what to do with himself. All that energy.

And it had to be subdued, and he would walk the streets and bring his hands and just didn't know what to do. I wonder as Christians if we don't have to face the reality of life and adjust to it in such a way that we shall bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ as we grow older, gratefully, and recognize that these things are a part of our life. God gave to us a desire to live, and it's good that he included that in our physical system.

Otherwise, I suppose we would give up. As soon as something goes wrong with the body, we immediately try to find some help, and rightly so. God put into our bodies reflex action, so that when we ... Well, let me talk to some of the older men.

Did you have a Model T Ford? And one day, accidentally, you touched the spark plug while the motor was running. And something happened immediately. A message went from your hand up to your brain, and said, that hurts.

And the brain said, well, take your hand off. And by that time, you had your hand off the spark plug. Built-in reflex action to prevent us from being harmed.

I read a prayer not so long ago that I think is fitting for us, and I want you to listen very carefully. Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older, and will someday be old. By the way, at Park of the Palms, are you allowed to use that word, if I have it in a prayer? I guess we are.

Otherwise, you don't use it. It's about yourself. Okay, all right.

I am growing older, and will someday be old. That's putting it mildly. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject, and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful, but not moody. Helpful, but not bossy.

Free my mind from the recital of endless details. Give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains.

They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the days go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure them with patience. I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cock-sureness that my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I might be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint.

Some of them are so hard to live with. But a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see some good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people, and give me, Lord, the grace to tell them so." I thought there was quite a bit of wisdom in that so far as our growing older is concerned.

Now in regards to the depreciation of the body, I guess we have to go to that next score from 60 to 80. And maybe the things that we have learned in this previous one are increasing. And eventually we will go to the doctor and say there's something wrong, and he gets his instruments out, and he says you will come to my office and I will explain some of the details.

And he says there are some minor things that need to be repaired, some deficiencies that need to be helped along, and so on, but there's nothing serious. But eventually, each one of us will maybe have to face the time when the doctor will look rather sad and start to hedge a bit. And the more he hedges, the more suspicions that arise.

And we say to him, now I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And the doctor says, are you sure? Yes, I'm sure. Well, the report is not good, and you will have to take it.

After reading this prayer, I have difficulty in giving you one of my personal experiences. I don't know how I can do it after having read that. But sometimes we may hold back things that we have experienced without sharing with people.

And maybe we should. So, I'm going to share with you what I have found in this particular area. And then if you think it's wrong, well, I can't help it.

At least I have shared it, and maybe it will help someone. Three o'clock in the morning, or approximately, I'm awake, and I have a strange ache in my upper left arm. I must have slept on it.

It's asleep, and I've got to rub it. But whatever it is, it's a strange feeling. But eventually, I go to sleep again.

I wake up at around six in the morning, and that same dull ache, not really an ache, but a discomfort in the upper part of the left arm. Never had that before. I wonder what it is.

Something new has come to see me. Washed and ready for breakfast, sit down at the breakfast table, and immediately, I need fresh air. This is just before Christmas.

I go to the front door, and I get a whiff of that good cold air. I've got to lie down. And by that time, of course, if you have a good wife, she says, I'm going to call the doctor.

And if it's serious enough, you don't argue with her at that point. And the doctor says, if it is what I think it is, you call the ambulance, and I will meet you at the Watasa. And that was my first ride in the ambulance.

I am nauseated by that time. And we get to the doctor's office, and in a very short time, he says, you have had a coronary thrombosis, and this will require rest. I would like to suggest that you will probably be hospitalized for one month, and the first week, at least, in the intensive care unit.

You have had a heart attack. Doctor, are you sure? My heart is here, and I don't have any pain right here. Are you trying to tell me that my heart is in my left arm? That's the only place I have any pain.

He said, they're not all alike. Well, I said, I've heard of people, and they say it feels like a ton of bricks is crushing you, and you can't get away from it. It's just crushing you.

I haven't got the slightest bit of pain in my chest. Just in here. He said, sometimes people have fooled me, and they've had the pain in the right arm, which is rather unusual.

But, anyway, the instruments have told me the story, and you have a rather serious heart attack. How do you adjust to that? A cast-iron stomach? You can do anything, and you've lived for a number of years, and you can do anything that any other man can do. And all at once, you come down.

And then the back's got dread. You will not even be able to feed yourself. A nurse, or an orderly, or a nurse's aide will be feeding you.

You will not even lift a spoon. Now, that's an awful shock to the system, is it not? But, each one of us will someday have to face something similar to that. To add to it, in a little while at the visiting hour, the children have left their employment, and they come to visit you, and you are aware of the fact that this may be the end, that you didn't expect so suddenly.

But the doctor says, you must relax. And, if ever you appreciate your salvation, it is at that moment. Because I could say then, one of two things are going to happen to me.

Either I get better and pull through, or else I go to heaven. And nothing else can happen but one of those two. And I can't lose.

If I get better, I win. If I go to heaven, I win. And if I had to make a selection of the two, that would be a hard selection.

Because, by nature, I want to live as long as I want to, as I can. But, to be with Christ is far better. And, of course, the human side enters in.

I will have to leave my family and all the relatives that I have. And then, because I'm an old man, I can say, you know, I have just about as many relatives on the other side as here. So, I'm not going to leave any of my relatives.

I'm just going to exchange them. Exchange these for those. Even in that area, I don't lose anything.

And, before going to sleep, I said, you know, I haven't seen Mr. Harper lately. I haven't seen George Landis lately. I went over a list of preachers that I knew that were now in heaven.

And I had the anticipation of saying, maybe, before this day is over, I will be in the presence of these, and also my blessed Lord. And then I reflected. I said, suppose I wasn't saved.

And unsaved people come to that bigger point, too. Then I would have to say, one of three things will happen to me. Either I get better, or maybe, somehow, by some strange event, I'll slip into heaven.

Or, maybe, I will be in hell before this day is over. Now, that would have been dreadful, would it not? And your salvation is wonderful the day that you trust the Savior, but you never realize the full value of that. It unfolds itself day after day.

And to come to the end of the road, or presumably the end of the road, and to be able to say, I can relax. Now, one of the questions that will come to you at that moment, and it came to me, am I responsible for what has happened? And I said, now, what did I do that might have caused this? And I couldn't find any particular reason that it had been. But I lived a normal life.

I felt that I took care of my body. But it happened. And I think it was a relief to be able to say, as far as I know, this is something beyond my control.

I didn't cause it. But I think it would have been very hard to relax if I had been conscious of something that I had done in the way of neglecting my body that might have caused it. We had a neighbor living right next door to us in the city of Durham who was a chain smoker.

And she probably smoked two packs of cigarettes a day. And she laughed when she heard that the Surgeon General had put out a report that all advertising for cigarettes must carry the label, this may be injurious to your health. What do they know about it? They're just trying to scare people.

Just about three months ago, we heard that she was in the hospital and she has lung cancer. And we feel that she may not be a Christian, and we wanted to contact her. But we heard from relatives, she is in her room, she won't let anybody come in.

She doesn't want to see anybody. She wants to be alone. And I think she is fighting with her conscience.

All this while, I was a victim, and I brought this upon myself. And now, I'm paying the price for fighting against knowledge that I had. Now, we want to try, when that point comes, if it comes, to be able to have a clear conscience and to say, as far as I know, I did not contribute to an early death.

It's wonderful that God gave us the desire to live, and God gave us also a desire to take care of our bodies. Now, I think I need to mention once more that we are creatures that tend to go to extremes. And I know some people who are reading books continually on health problems, and I don't know whether I have a right word to call them, but in North Carolina we call them health nuts, or health fanatics.

One was in our home some years ago from the state of Virginia, a preacher who told us all of the things that people were doing to kill themselves early. Eating white bread, which is absolutely poisonous, after it gets into your stomach, it's just like a ball of putty. And people are being killed by eating white bread.

And my wife said after he went to bed, you know, there's a pretty good chance that we'll outlive him. And I don't know whether that had anything to do with his death two years later, but he was gone, and maybe he was right. I don't know.

But I do think it's possible for us to go too far in this, and say, oh, I can't even live a normal life because I'm afraid of this and this and this. But I think that besides the five senses that God gave us, and I mentioned it yesterday morning, is common sense. And I think we still need to employ that in regards to the care of our body, because we have to have good bodies if we're going to serve the Lord.

Our loved ones who are in heaven are there as, is it correct to say, disembodied spirits. You don't have to have a body to worship the Lord. But you do have to have a body to serve the Lord.

And those who are in heaven are worshipping and praising and singing the Lord's praises just as if they had bodies. But in order to serve him down here, we do have to have healthy bodies. Now I hope that my message this morning has not been too sad.

But we can do one or the other. We can do as the proverbial ostrich does, run away from reality or faith. And I think the Lord wants us to be prepared for any eventuality.

What to expect from the body? You can't talk yourself into the fact that you're going to live 100 years or 110 or 120. You already have almost concluded that I'm going to follow the normal routine. It may be tomorrow.

It may be today. It may be 10 years. It may be 30 years.

It may be that I'll outlive everyone in this room. God knows. And he doesn't make any mistake when he leaves that in his hands.

But let's not overlook the fact that God has given us these bodies, and he expects us to use them wisely and for his glory. My time is up. Let's close in prayer.

Our Father, we thank thee again for thy blessed words, reminding us what to expect of these bodies of ours. Thou hast made them. They are fearfully and wonderfully made, and we thank thee for them.

We thank thee, too, that thou hast so arranged these bodies to wear out, and that eventually we leave them. And we thank thee for the salvation thou hast provided for us, so that at that day we can with joy slip into thy presence, leave these bodies, and be forever with thee. We pray thou wilt help us to wisely take care of these bodies and use them for thy glory.

We give thee thanks for what thou hast given us in thy words to guide us and to direct us. And we ask thy blessing on all who are bowed before thee, various degrees of health that we enjoy, and we thank thee for thy goodness to us. We accept the strength and the health thou dost give us, and we thank thee that thou dost allow us to use this for thy glory.

We look to thee for thy blessing, the remainder of this day, for thy protection. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10123.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/welcome-detweiler/spiritsoul-and-body-01-1-thes523/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net